Fake payments by Defence Estate Officer at Chandigarh

2180. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Defence Estate Officer at Chandigarh made bogus payment, worth several lakhs of rupees for four panchayats in Punjab in 1997-1998;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) action Government have taken against officers involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A case was reported in March, 1999 about release of Rs. 38.25 Lakhs by the Defence Estate Officer (DEO), Chandigarh to various Panchayats of Bhatinda and Patiala Districts in Punjab on account of Service Charges payable to local bodies during 1997-1998, serious procedural irregularities were stated to have been committed by the then DEO Chandigarh.

Disciplinary proceedings were ordered immediately and all the officers alleged to have been involved were placed under suspension. Further, the officer approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) for revocation of suspension and on the orders of the CAT, the orders of suspension were revoked and the Departmental Inquiry is under progress.

Diversification of coast guard activities

2181. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the various activities presently being undertaken by the Coast Guard;

(b) whether Government have a proposal to diversify the activities of the Indian Coast Guard; and

(c) if so, the details of the diversification programme launched or proposed to be launched?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The activities of the Coast Guard are limited to the duties and functions laid down under section 14 of the Coast Guard Act, 1978. The various activities of Coast Guard are as follows:—

1. Safety and protection of artificial islands, offshore terminals and other structures and devices.
2. Protection.of Indian fishermen.
3. Assistance to fishermen in distress at sea.
4. Prevention and protection of marine environment.
5. Prevention and control of marine pollution.
6. Assisting the Customs'and other authorities in anti smuggling operations.
7. Enforcement of marine laws in force.
8. Safety of life and property at sea.
9. Collection of scientific data.
10. Other duties as may be prescribed by the Government of India.

The Coast Guard duties and functions are statutory in accordance with the provisions of the Coast Guard Act, and therefore, there is no proposal to diversify the activities of the Indian Coast Guard.

Pull out from LoC along Pakistan border

2182. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that pull out of defence forces from LoC along Pakistan border has not yielded desired results so far as cross border infiltration of terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir is concerned;

(b) how many encounters between security forces and terrorists have taken place near LoC and .during terrorists' attacks on defence establishment in Jammu and Kashmir after the pull out;

(c) the loss of lives and property during these encounters; and